



Research Brief

Leadership Teams

Question: What is current thinking on building a Leadership Team from scratch?

Summary of Findings:

The focus on school change and improvement over the last few decades has greatly increased the leadership tasks required in a school, and has created a need for shared leadership to help schools become more effective in their planning, decision-making, and implementation of their programs. This focus has generated research and thought on what makes for an effective leadership team. What is written exclusively about high schools is limited, so this brief reflects research on leadership teams at all levels.

There isn't one model for how to organize a leadership team. An article by Hallinger & Richardson (1988), for example, describes and analyzes the following models of teacher decision-making: (1) Instructional Leadership Teams; (2) Principals' Advisory Councils; (3) School Improvement Teams; and (4) Lead Teacher Committees.

It is important to recall that the overarching purpose of the school is for every student to learn and achieve to high standards (in Maine, the tag line is "Every Student College-Ready"). Certainly, instruction is one component but there are many others and can't all be accomplished by just anyone. A study of an elementary school without a principal, where the principal's duties were distributed to the teachers, found that the management tasks were adequately addressed, but not the leadership tasks. Another study found that principals, other school leaders, and the school culture each play a different role in school change and support the notion of collaborative leadership:

Results show that the principal seems to be the primary source of identifying and articulating a vision and providing an appropriate model. Leadership teams seem to be the primary source of providing intellectual stimulation and holding high expectations. There is a mix of principal and leadership-team influence as sources of fostering commitment to group goals and providing individualized support. School culture factors reveal that the leadership team, rather than the principal, seems to exert the greatest influence upon collaborative leadership and learning partnership. The principal, rather than leadership teams, seems to exert the greatest influence upon teacher collaboration and unity of purpose.

A school leadership team is typically made up of some combination of administrators, parents, teachers, school staff, community members, and students. Diversity in the make up of the team is critical for success. In New York City, high school leadership teams are made up of at least the Principal, Parent Association/Parent-Teacher (PA/PTA) President, United Federation of Teachers (UFT) Chapter leader, or their designees, and at least two students. This approach to building a team insures that different stakeholders are represented.

When composing a leadership team, the principal might also want to consider personalities. Several studies identified various roles individuals take on in the group, and teams made up of diverse roles were more effective than those made up of individuals taking on similar roles. Typical roles include: (1) definer (creating the team's reality), (2) analyst (exploring and mapping the team's reality), (3) interpreter (predicting what others are likely to see), (4) critic (redefining, reanalyzing, and reinterpreting the team's reality), (5) synthesizer (orchestrating what the team knows), (6) disparity monitor (gauging what outsiders think), (7) task monitor (keeping the team on course), and (8) emotional monitor (remembering emotions).

Brand new leadership teams have the additional chore of building trust with the school's staff: Some research finds that the leadership teams can take several steps to improve the chances for the development of trust in and collaboration with their leadership teams:

- (1) articulate behavioral norms that endorse systemic thinking;
- (2) develop and support cross-functional planning groups;
- (3) make clear that team behaviors are supposed to further institutional goals, not advocate for departmental- or self-interest; and
- (4) provide frequent opportunities for interpersonal interaction among team members, especially during early stages of team development.



Research Brief

Online Resources:

(Note: ERIC documents can be found by going to <http://www.eric.ed.gov/> and entering the ERIC ID#)

Models of Shared Leadership: Evolving Structures and Relationships.

Hallinger, Philip; Richardson, Don;

Urban Review; v20 n4 p229-45 Win 1988

Explores potential changes in the power relationships among teachers and principals. Describes and analyzes the following models of teacher decision-making: (1) Instructional Leadership Teams; (2) Principals' Advisory Councils; (3) School Improvement Teams; and (4) Lead Teacher Committees.

ERIC #: EJ390063

Schools without Principals: Do Both Management and Leadership Exist?

Creighton, Theodore B.;

Research in the Schools; v6 n1 p17-24 Spr 1999

Studied an elementary school in Casper, Wyoming, that functions without a principal. Each of the identified responsibilities of the principal is assigned to one or two individuals. Teacher teams appear to handle management responsibilities rather successfully, but are not addressing many of the leadership responsibilities of building principals.

ERIC #: EJ610700

School Leadership Teams

NYC Department of Education

The Office of School Leadership Teams help schools become more effective in their planning, decision-making, and implementation processes. Staff members train regional-level coordinators and school personnel to use principles of the Yale University Child Study Center's School Development Program ("SDP") model of school reform. School leadership teams are led to identify key stakeholders for membership on the team by analyzing their schools' and communities' unique academic, social, and demographic characteristics.

<http://www.nycenet.edu/Administration/Offices/youthdev/SchoolLeadershipTeams/default.htm>

Transformational Leadership: Principals, Leadership Teams, and School Culture.

Lucas, Stephen Earl; Valentine, Jerry Wayne;

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the relationships among principal transformational leadership, school leadership-team transformational leadership, and school culture. Results show that the principal seems to be the primary source of identifying and articulating a vision and providing an appropriate model. Leadership teams seem to be the primary source of providing intellectual stimulation and holding high expectations. There is a mix of principal and leadership-team influence as sources of fostering commitment to group goals and providing individualized support. School culture factors reveal that the leadership team, rather than the principal, seems to exert the greatest influence upon collaborative leadership and learning partnership. The principal, rather than leadership teams, seems to exert the greatest influence upon teacher collaboration and unity of purpose. These and other findings are supportive of the current movement in education toward collaborative forms of school leadership.

ERIC #: ED468519

The Thinking Team: Toward a Cognitive Model of Administrative Teamwork in Higher Education.

Neumann, Anna;

The paper examines the joint interactive process of top-level administrative leadership teams of colleges or universities, with emphasis on the team's collective thinking. It focuses on how individual team members, who report directly to the president, make sense of their own and each other's activities on the team (for example, by constructing certain types or roles) rather than on the nature of effects of the activities themselves. Seventy administrators at 15 campuses were interviewed concerning the administrative team's organization, functions, and internal dynamics. Analysis revealed the following typical roles: (1) definer (creating the team's reality), (2) analyst (exploring and mapping the team's reality), (3) interpreter (predicting what others are likely to see), (4) critic (redefining, reanalyzing, and reinterpreting the team's reality), (5) synthesizer (orchestrating what the team knows), (6) disparity monitor (gauging what outsiders think), (7) task monitor (keeping the team on course), and (8) emotional monitor (remembering emotions). Teams were also analyzed on the basis of how clearly cognitive roles were articulated in the



Research Brief

areas of: role content and quality of role performance, stage of team development and team integration, role prevalence, role configuration, cognitive differentiation and cognitive complexity, and management of cognitive differentiation.

ERIC #: ED320476

Turning Diversity into a Strength for Decision Making.

Hergert, Leslie F.;

Journal of Staff Development; v18 n3 p12-15 Sum 1997

Describes a study that examined how relationships within diverse leadership teams engaged the strengths of all members to make decisions and transform schools. Results indicated that diversity issues affecting team effectiveness were apparent in team composition, agenda topics, and group representation. This paper presents recommendations for staff developers, principals, and teacher leaders involved in team-member training and support.

ERIC #: EJ586878

Administrative Team-Building in the Academic Institution: The Key Role of Behavioral Style.

Darling, John R.; Pomatto, Mary Carol;

Leadership Journal: Women in Leadership--Sharing the Vision; v3 n2 p17-30 Spr 1999

Describes four behavioral styles (relater, analyzer, director, and socializer), which often reflect the balance of individuals that make up effective administrative leadership teams. Each style has strengths and weaknesses, and each typically has a back-up style used in times of stress. This "style flex" can enable all parties to function in a comfort zone congruent with the situation.

ERIC #: EJ593400

The New Structure of School Improvement: Inquiring Schools and Achieving Students.

Joyce, Bruce; Calhoun, Emily; Hopkins, David;

Site-based management has failed to generate change significant enough to increase student learning even where principals, leadership teams, and faculties have had extensive Organizational Development training. The problem may lie in the nature of the workplace rather than in the reasonableness of the theory. This work presents a structure of school improvement built by comparing the differences between schools that regularly generate unexpectedly high levels of student learning and those where student learning is normal. The former schools are self-renewing, and the process creates ongoing, disciplined inquiry, promoting the continuous study of student learning and initiatives to improve achievement in academic, personal, and social fields. Schools as workplaces include study time for teachers, continuous staff development, and schools governed by staff, parents, community agencies, business partners, and local district personnel.

ERIC #: ED439493

Configurations of School-Based Leadership Teams.

Hall, Gene E.; Hord, Shirley M.;

In this paper a new conception of leadership for change is proposed--that of change facilitating leadership teams that are characterized by roles, functions, and team dynamics. As an introduction, the conventional descriptions of leadership in the literature are briefly cited. This is followed by a summary of recent studies and observations focused on the functions of leadership. Building on this work and on the results of our recent research on school principals as change facilitators, the concept of change facilitator teams is presented. Recent research findings and brief examples are used to illustrate the different configurations of school-based leadership teams, their organization and operations.

ERIC #: ED297415

Trust and Collaboration in "Zero-History" Administrative Teams.

Dee, Jay R.; Dole, Susan; Phair, Charles; Shay, Pat;

Traditions of shared governance and the complexity of problems faced by colleges and universities suggest the need for effective collective action. This study examined leadership teams in two sites: a new 2-year public institution formed by merger and a new 4-year private institution. Findings suggest that higher education leaders can take several steps to improve prospects for the development of trust and collaboration in their administrative teams: (1) articulate behavioral norms that endorse systemic thinking; (2) develop and support cross-functional planning groups; (3) make clear that team behaviors are supposed to further institutional goals, not advocate for departmental- or self-interest; and (4) provide frequent opportunities for interpersonal interaction among team members, especially during early stages of team development.

ERIC #: ED478599



The Principals' Partnership
<http://www.principalspartnership.com>
Sponsored by Union Pacific Foundation

Research Brief

So You Think Team Leadership Is Easy? Training And Implementation Concerns

Sheppard, Bruce, Brown, Jean
NASSP Bulletin, Mar 2000

We cannot be certain all schools striving to become "Learning organizations" endorse team leadership as a means to successful change. The ability of administrators to make the shift depends on their understanding of emerging Leadership theories, the extent to which potential followers view this as an appropriate model, and the ability to deal with other contextual variables.

http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3696/is_200003/ai_n8899281

Essential Leadership in the School Change Process

Kathleen Cushman
Horace. Vol. 13, # 4. Mar. 1997.

What does it take to lead people through school change? Who can do it, and how? What responsibilities fall to school leaders in pressing the conversation about hard issues, creating a sense of urgency, yet not discouraging those for whom change means loss, risk, and uncertainty?

http://www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces_res/101

A Framework for Shared Leadership.

Lambert, Linda;
Educational Leadership; v59 n8 p37-40 May 2002

Asserts that principals can improve student learning by sharing the leadership of instruction with teachers and parents thereby building leadership capacity. Describes characteristics of schools with high leadership capacity. Provides examples of building leadership capacity through the use of study groups, action-research teams, and leadership teams.

ERIC #: EJ644980

Submitted Date: 4/17/2006 By: Mike Muir, Maine Center for Meaningful Engaged Learning

<http://www.principalspartnership.com>

This is provided as a service to educators by The Principals Partnership and Union Pacific Foundation, neither of which assumes any responsibility for the content of the brief or the positions taken by the authors or the Web sites or other authors whose works are included. This research brief reflects information currently available and is not the official position of The Principals Partnership or Union Pacific Foundation.

Disclaimer: All URLs listed in this site have been tested for accuracy, and contents of Web sites examined for quality, at the time of addition. Content accuracy and appropriateness, however, cannot be guaranteed over time as Web sites and their contents change constantly. The author takes no responsibility for difficulties which may result from the use of any Web site listed herein. Please notify the [Webmaster](#) if you find any dead links or inappropriate material.

Permission: You may use or download content for research or educational purposes, or for your personal, noncommercial purposes, provided you keep unchanged all copyright and other notices with them. No other use of any content is permitted. You agree that you will make only lawful use of this research brief, and will only use these briefs in compliance with all federal, state and local laws and regulations. You agree that you will make no use of the research that violates anyone else's rights, including copyright, trademark, trade secret, right of privacy, right of publicity or other rights.